

## **Marine Advisory Committee**

**November 4, 2014**

**Milton, Florida**

The Marine Advisory Committee met on above date with the following members present:

Jeff Marker, Rick Harris, Pascoe Gibson, Scot Mason and Scott Walker. Also present

was the County Administrator, Hunter Walker; Chris Verlinde, Marine Extension Agent;

Roger Blaylock, County Engineer; and Avis Whitfield, Public Works Director. Chairman

Jeff Marker called the meeting to order at 5:00p.m.

The minutes of the August 5, 2014 meeting were approved.

### **FISH ADVISORY SIGNAGE**

Ms. Verlinde stated that representatives from the Health Department were unable to

attend today's meeting but she had been working with them on compiling some

information. She distributed a handout which has a lot of information for South Florida

as well as information for our area which is especially important due to the concerns

expressed at the last meeting. Listed at the bottom of the handout are PCP warnings

which was one of the concerns that Barbara Albrect had expressed at the last meeting.

Ms. Verlinde said that the Health Department had been busy but wanted to share the

information with this committee to see about the possibility of having it printed.

Mr.

Marker said that even though it's a Health Department issue, it makes sense to provide a

link to this information from the website. Mr. Mason agreed that a link would be a good

idea since there is a lot of information and it would be too much to place on a sign.

Hunter Walker asked Ms. Verlinde to work together with the Health Department to determine the best way to handle.

#### **NATURAL RESOURCE DAMAGE ASSESSMENT (NRDA) PROJECTS UPDATE**

Hunter Walker distributed a copy of the update which he stated had become final. He added that the DEP and the FWC have finalized their early restoration projects across the eight primarily affected counties and the ones included in Santa Rosa County are listed which we had previously discussed. A news release was issued on these projects which included Navarre Beach Coastal Access and Dune Restoration with construction of two beach access boardwalks from one of the existing pavilions and parking areas to the Santa Rosa Sound and construction of a canoe kayak launch.

Mr.

which would be a dune walkover access to the beach and parking area. This would be essentially between the western most existing pavilion and the parking lot of the public area. The Gulf Breeze Wayside Park Boat Ramp project will repair the existing boat ramp and construct the public restroom facility which will generally improve the Wayside Park. The Escribano Point portion of the Yellow River will improve public access and this is some of the additional work that would be done using early restoration funds.

Walker stated the 2nd project is the construction of a gulf side walkover complex

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Mr. Walker stated that we were advised by the state that they will be managing and constructing these projects. Typically what we had thought is that there would be a subgrant between DEP and the county and then we would be responsible for engineering. Then bid documents and construction plans with specifications would be developed which would then be awarded by the Board and managed by Engineering.

Mr. Marker asked if there were any in the water type projects like oyster reef restoration or enhanced grass planting. Ms. Verlinde said there is a regional project that does have oyster reef enhancement for the fishery which is in the list that was provided by Mr. Walker. She added that there are not a lot of details provided. She said that the proposed scallop project will be done in the Pensacola Bay System, primarily Santa Rosa Sound. The regional artificial reef project has been approved but there is a question on whether or not the Department of Interior will require sidescan sonar so at this time everything is at a standstill.

Mr. Harris asked if there had been any word from the Nature Conservancy on funding as well as plans for eight miles of oyster restoration along the north shore. He added that he was in hopes they could get help to build up the shoreline that we are losing and help the marine grasses to take back over. Mr. Gibson asked if this was part of the Restore money and Mr. Walker said this was part of the oil spill money, referred to as the Natural Resources Damage Act. He added that it is supposed to be a very small amount of what is coming but it had been specifically released by the responsible party which is BP and others to build good will. Mr. Walker said that one of the reasons it has moved so slowly is because it has to go through the five states and trustees. BP then everything because they have to make sure they get credit to offset any subsequent fines through these type projects.

Ms. Verlinde gave an update from John Dordil and stated the total for these five projects in Florida was close to 29 million. She added that this total is split regionally and she isn't sure if they have determined how much each county will get for the artificial reef project. Mr. Gibson expressed concern of how the money was going to be spent and wanted to see it spent on something that will work especially since the rock did not appear to be working. Mr. Harris asked if the County Commissioners should get involved at the state level. Mr. Walker said Com. Lynchard has been the liaison with the NRDA and Restore piece of it and that we may need to look into that. Mr. Marker said we need to make it known that we are in need of some assistance especially in regard to our oyster industry.

#### CHAIRMAN/MEMBER ISSUES

Mr. Marker asked as we start toward the winter season if there is any maintenance work planned. Mr. Whitfield said there are no current projects planned but better inspections can be done with winter tides. He added that there would be some maintenance work done on some of the boat ramps. Mr. Harris said that Oriole Beach and Woodlawn Beach would be on that list. Mr. Whitfield said that some areas such as those shallow water ramps like Woodlawn Beach and Oriole beach can't be fixed since dredging is difficult because of the seagrass.

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#### has to approve

Mr. Mason asked about the latest update on the Escambia River log jam. Mr. Walker said the information that he had last was from the Escambia County Marine Resource Officer Robert Turpin and that they had cancelled the purchase order for that work. Mr. Whitfield stated that Robert Turpin had asked for the contact information on the individual who was the low bidder but that the bid was still too high, far higher than there was funding for. Mr. Walker said he would send out an email to inquire what the status is and will send out a response.

Scott Walker said he had received a phone call from an individual last month who said that he had been awarded the contract by Escambia County and he was looking for an area to stage the operation. Hunter Walker said they had contacted Public Works about using the new boat ramp. Mr. Whitfield said he had made contact with them about trying to get permission to use that ramp but was still unclear about what they were trying to accomplish. He added that he didn't think he had a contract to remove any substantial amount of the log jam but that it was some preliminary work. Mr. Marker said that this same individual had called him. Mr. Marker made contact with Robert Turpin who stated that two partners had been awarded the project but they split up. The individual making contact with the county was one of the partners and he didn't have the ability to do what he needed to do. Mr. Marker added that this would probably need to be taken up at the next meeting.

Ms. Verlinde reminded everyone the due date for the state artificial reef proposals will be in March of next year. She also stated that the Florida Boating Improvement grants will be due later in the year. These grants are usually for projects such as building restrooms or issues involving education. Mr. Marker asked if the near short permit had expired and Ms. Verlinde stated that it had been renewed. He added that he would like to see a reef project done to benefit the people that live here.

#### PROJECTS

#### *ISSUES UPDATE*

Boater Registration Fees as of October 31,2014 is \$196,159.

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting is scheduled for January 6, 2015 at 5:00p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Committee the meeting was adjourned at 5:45p.m.